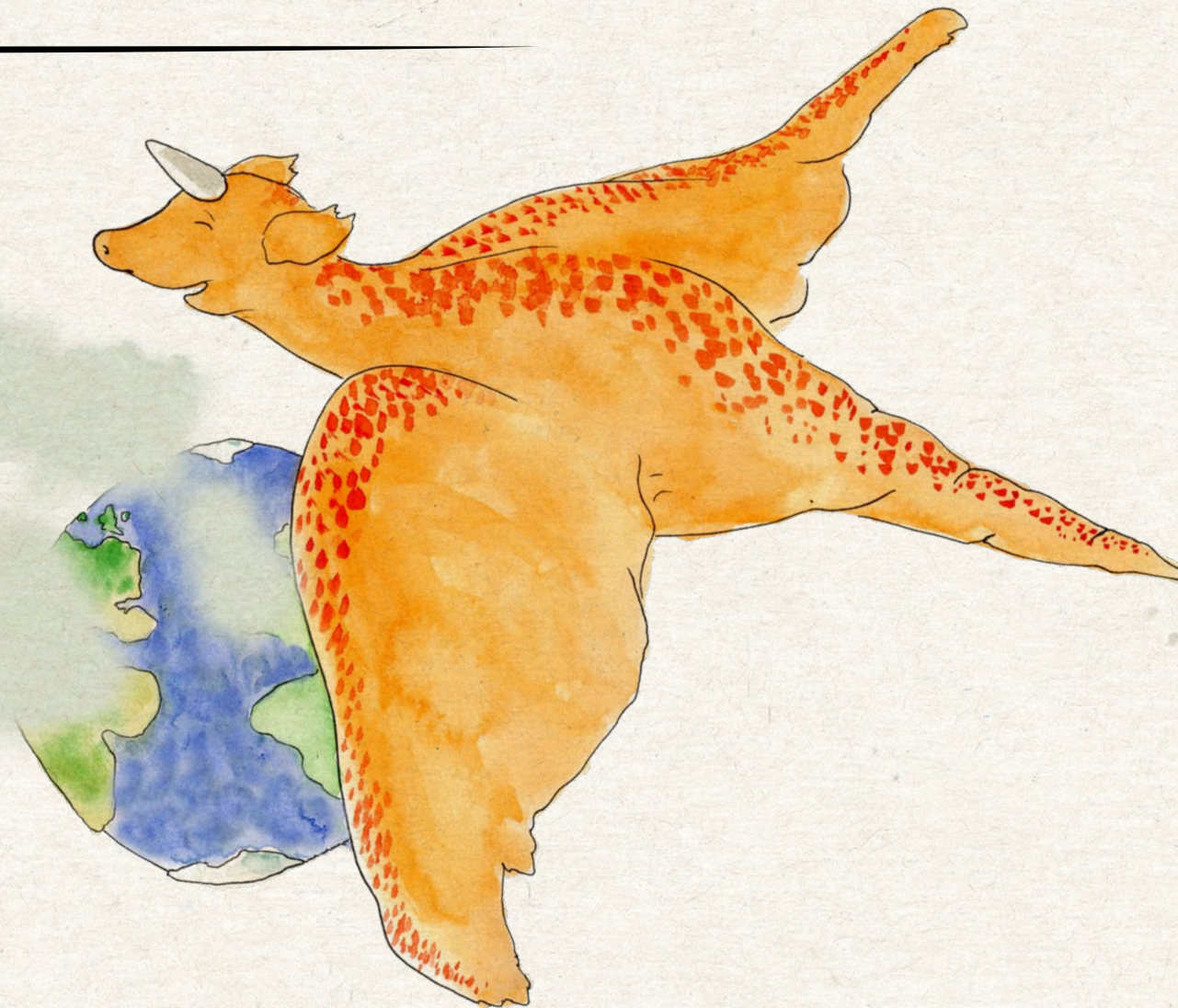


Highlights one year on from the release of the IASC MHPSS RG children's storybook on COVID-19 in April 2020



My Hero is You reached many readers from around the world



Introduction

One year ago, during March 2020, over 1700 children from 104 countries helped to create a children's storybook on COVID-19 that has reached many hundreds of thousands of children worldwide and became a success story of global reach. The children's storybook *My Hero is You*, how kids can fight COVID-19, was initially launched in six languages, and one year later, there are now over [138 translations](#) and more than [50 multimedia adaptations](#) and accessible formats available.

My Hero is You is a project of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings ([IASC MHPSS RG](#)). This Reference Group is a unique collaboration of United Nations agencies, national and international nongovernmental organizations and international agencies providing mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. The IASC MHPSS RG developed a wide range of mental health and psychosocial support resources and practical tools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, you can find the full list [here](#).

The IASC MHPSS RG used storytelling to share mental health messages on COVID-19 with children. The book for 6-11 year-olds explains to children how they can protect themselves and others from COVID-19 and how to manage difficult emotions related to this pandemic.

After its release in March 2020, *My Hero is You* has become one of the most translated children's books and one of the most translated UN documents ever. Translations and adaptations have been produced by IASC MHPSS RG members and other collaborating UN organizations, international and local nongovernmental organizations, universities, governments, professional associations and individuals. A variety of accessible formats and creative adaptations were developed based on the story at the international, national and local level, such as braille transcripts, sign language interpretations, audio files, animations, colouring books, educational materials, audio files, puppet theatres and more. These translations and adaptations have been used in schools, homes and families, and the story's imaginary character, "Ario," has become a source of support and a close friend for children worldwide.

Thank you sincerely to everyone who has helped Ario reach as many children as possible to share messages that support the mental and psychosocial wellbeing of our children during the unprecedented COVID-19 times.

In 2020, the *My Hero is You* storybook for children on COVID-19 became a story of global solidarity and a symphony of collaboration among actors and communities to support children and their families' wellbeing and its imaginary character Ario has travelled around the world supporting children, teachers and families. Take a seat on Ario's wings and read the highlights of the one year journey around the world.

Translations and adaptations

Storybook available in

138

languages

50+

multimedia adaptations and accessible formats

61

of the languages are spoken in humanitarian settings

53

languages are considered indigenous or local languages

111

of the translations represent languages of low- and middle-income countries

Languages spoken in

India: [Hindi](#), [Urdu](#), [Assamese](#), [Gujarati](#), [Malayalam](#), [Marathi](#), [Telugu](#), [Meiti Mayek](#), [Kannada](#)

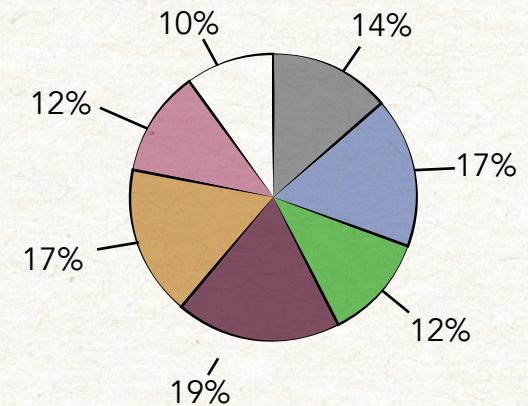
South Sudan: [Juba Arabic](#), [Dinka](#), [Nuer](#) and [Barri](#).

Uganda: [Luganda](#), [Acholi](#), [Lugbara](#), [Lhukonzo](#), [Adhola](#), [Runyankore](#), [Swahili](#), [Kinyarwanda](#).

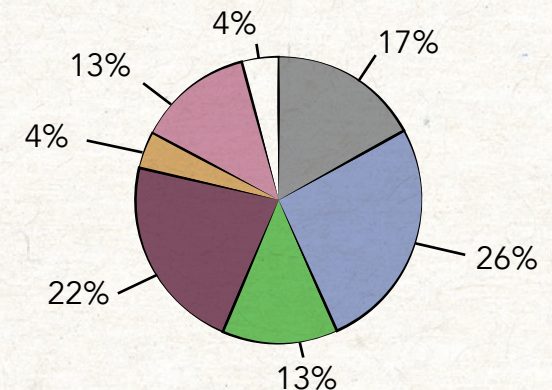
Translations and adaptations have been produced by

- UN organizations
- Universities
- International non-governmental organizations
- Professional associations
- Governments
- Non-governmental organizations
- Other and local organizations

Translations



Adaptations



Translations and adaptations

Sign Languages

[Sign language Vietnamese](#)
by UNICEF

[Sign language and closed captioning](#)
by Humanity & Inclusion in Arabic

[Sign language Korean](#)
by the Korean Psychological Association

[Sign language Indonesian](#)
by BaKTI and UNICEF

Read alouds

[Danish](#)
[Indonesian](#)
[English](#)
[Hindi](#)
[Georgian](#)
[Ukrainian](#)

Audio files

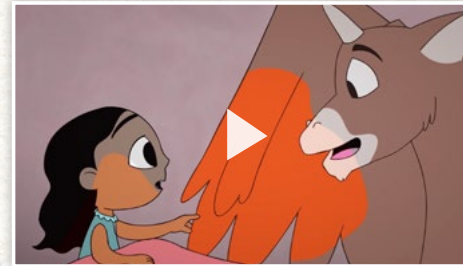
[Arabic](#)
[Bari](#)
[Bura-Pabir](#)
[Burmese](#)
[Chinese](#)
[Dinka](#)
[English](#)
[Fulfude](#)
[French](#)
[German](#)
[Hausa](#)
[Juba Arabic](#)
[Kanuri](#)
[Kibaku](#)
[Mandara](#)
[Marghi](#)
[Neur](#)
[Portuguese](#)
[Rohingya](#)
[Russian](#)
[Sesotho](#)
[Spanish](#)
[Shuwa Arabic](#)
[Swahili](#)
[Uzbek](#)
[Waha](#)

The official *My Hero is You* IASC webpage was viewed 346,662 times between April and October 2020.

Most-viewed adaptations

Creative animation by Stanford Center for Digital Health team

2.4 million views



Storytelling for young children by the Korean Psychological Association

198,290 views



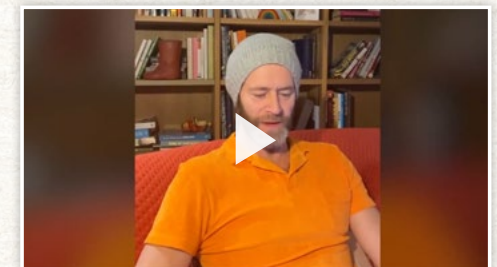
Filipino animation by the World Health Organization

346,000 views



English reading with with singer and musician Howard Donald, by the World Health Organization

52,369 views




Spanish reading


16,371 views



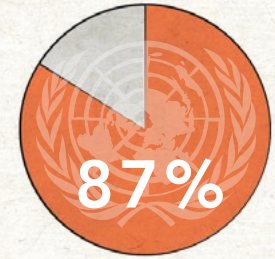
World map

The map shows where the storybook is available in the countries official language(s) so far.

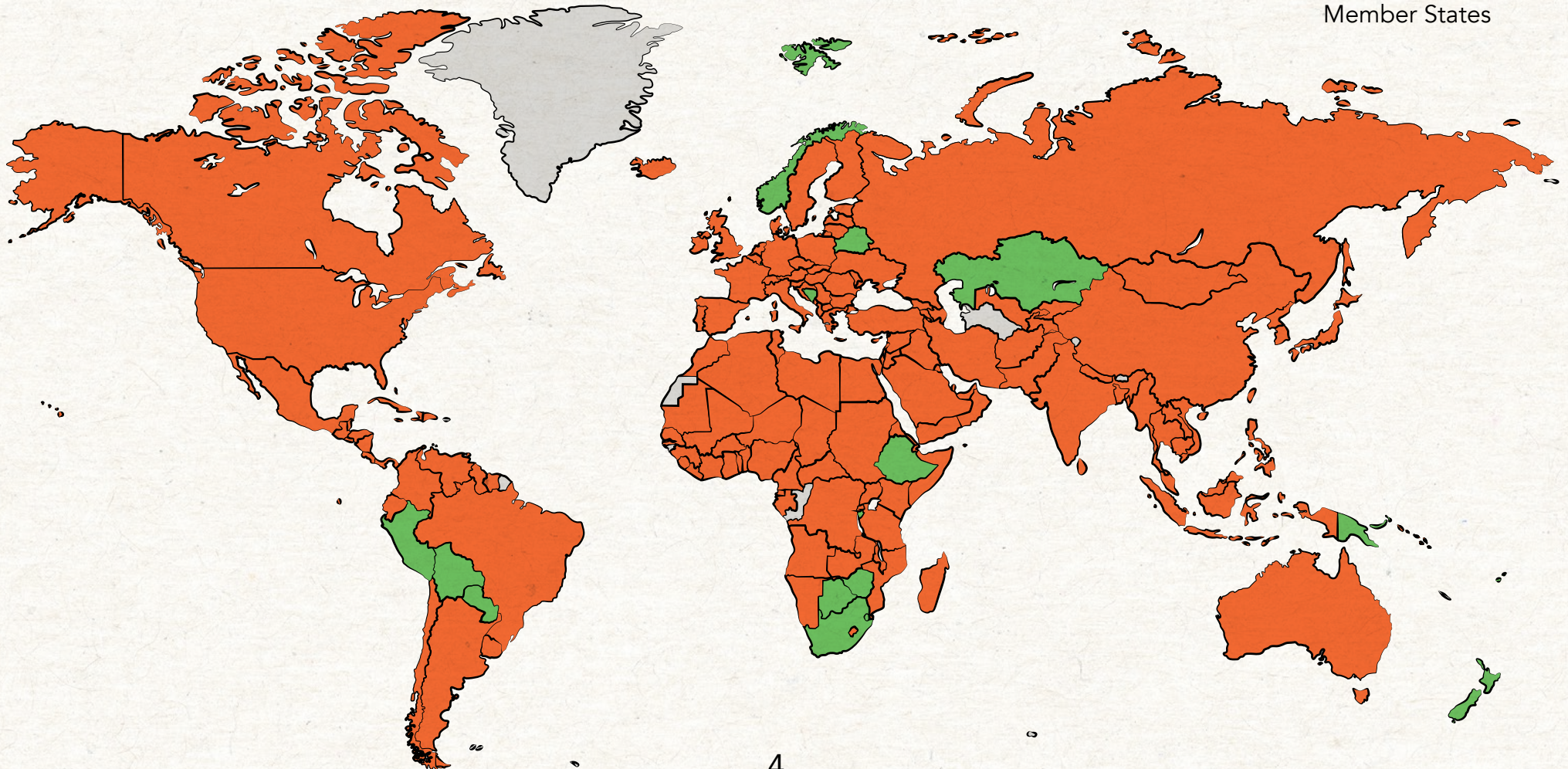
 Coverage of all official languages in the country

 Partial coverage of official languages in the country.

 None



My Hero is You is available in the official languages of 168 of the 194 UN Member States



Media

My Hero is You has been receiving remarkable interest from global, national and local media.

Worldwide coverage



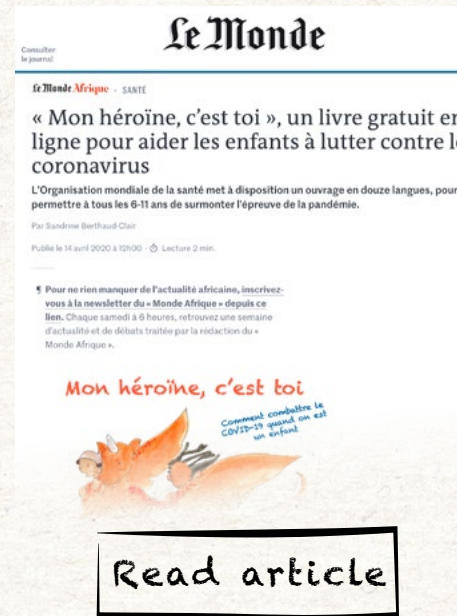
Coverage by the global media



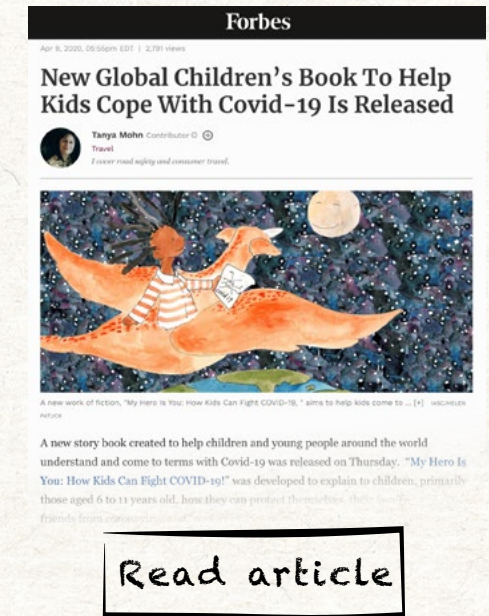
Read article



Read article



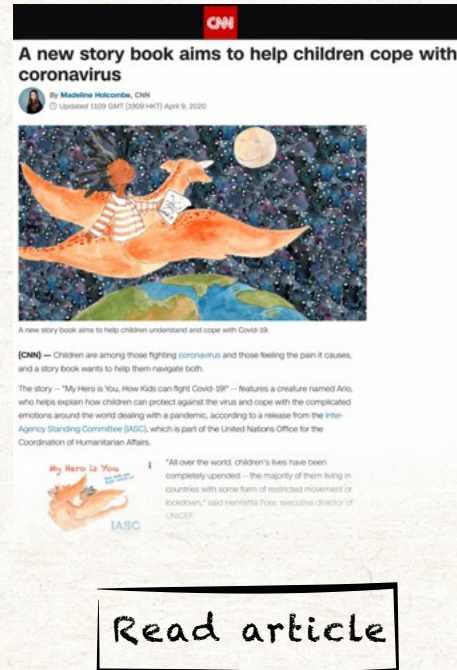
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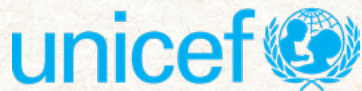
Quotes from collaborating partners

"Previous humanitarian emergencies have shown us how vital it is to address the fears and anxiety of young people when life as they know it gets turned upside down. We hope that this beautifully illustrated book, which takes children on a journey across time zones and continents, will help them to understand what they can do to stay positive and keep safe during the coronavirus outbreak."

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General



World Health
Organization



"All over the world, children's lives have been completely upended – the majority of them living in countries with some form of restricted movement or lockdown. This wonderful book helps children understand and navigate this new landscape and learn how they can take small actions to become the heroes in their own stories."

Henrietta Fore
Executive Director

"This is an important resource for children around the world with a strong message of inclusion at its heart – that this pandemic can only be beaten if everyone is included in its prevention and response. Children, including those who are refugees, displaced and stateless, can help too. No one is protected unless we are all protected."

Filippo Grandi
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



"Sharing facts and reliable information is vital to respond to COVID-19, and I wish to commend the creativity and passion of all artists, writers and publishers who find compelling ways to translate and craft stories and artwork so they can reach children and families to comfort and guide them through a distressing situation. UNESCO is proud to support this initiative and we see this as an example of the contribution of the artistic community to the well-being and resilience of all."

Audrey Azoulay
Director General



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Native American adaptation

41,487

Total hard-copy storybooks distributed

Reach

100%

Indian Health Service regions

56

Intertribal and urban organizations

27

US states

112

Tribal Health Departments /
Indian Health Service clinics

105

Tribes

44

Family Spirit (early childhood home
visiting programme) affiliates

12

First Nations communities
(Canada)

20

Head Start programmes



Read re-telling

The Center for American Indian Health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health adapted the original story for Indigenous (American Indian, Alaska Native, First Nations, Métis and Inuit) children affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. CIAH convened an intertribal team of Native American experts in child development and communications as well as a young native illustrator to rewrite the story and create illustrations that represent Indigenous peoples, values and communities. Indigenous communities have a strong tradition of storytelling, and this adapted story seeks to reach Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island and portray a sense of communal efficacy, strength and hope in the face of the pandemic.

Adaptations of Ario

The fantasy creature Ario has appeared in many different guises in the dozens of adaptations created.



Cartoon storytelling,
Turkey and Syria

[View video](#)



Animation adapted to the local context of children in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

[View video](#)



Cartoon storytelling,
Philippines

[View video](#)



Hand puppet theatre play, Syria

[View video](#)



Interactive theatre,
Brazil

[View video](#)



Clay figure, by primary school student in Ukraine



Animated in the Stanford video, USA

[View video](#)

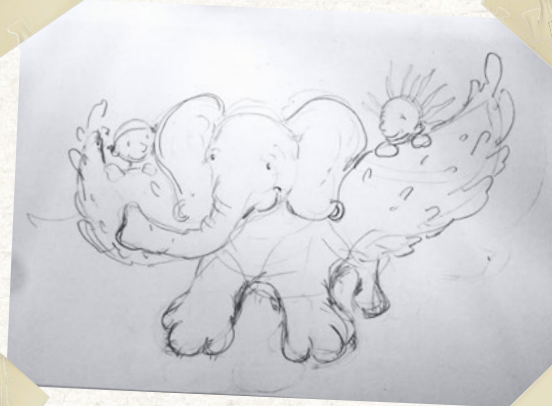


Ario as a wise eagle in the Native American adaptation

[View book](#)

The development of the storybook

Thousands of children, parents and teachers worldwide have helped to create *My Hero is You*. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC MHPSS RG) shared a global survey with parents and caregivers to understand children's mental health and psychosocial needs during these unprecedented times. The survey was translated into multiple languages and shared through various social media channels, UN and International NGOs Country Offices, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and over 50 other humanitarian organizations. More than 1700 children, parents, caregivers and teachers from 104 countries shared how they were coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. The responses were analysed with IASC MHPSS Reference Group to identify the topics to be covered in the storybook. Themes that came up included clear information on hand washing and physical distancing, a sense of agency and a way to help children cope with some of the realities of the pandemic, such as missing friends, staying home and losing relatives. This input was invaluable in making sure that the story and its messages resonated with children from different backgrounds and continents. The book was then tested through storytelling to children in several countries affected by COVID-19. The feedback received was used to review and strengthen the story. The storybook truly has been developed for and by children around the world.



During the *My Hero is You* development process, Ario's appearance underwent a transformation from a flying elephant to a horned fantasy creature. The illustrator responded to different cultural interpretations of colour – and magical creatures!



Stories of readers and adapters



Mongolia

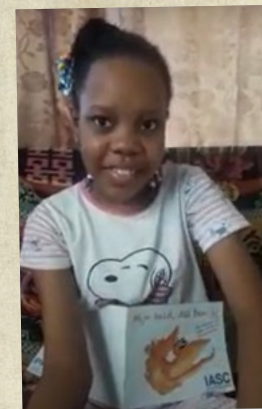
The World Health Organization (WHO) worked with 16 national TV channels to broadcast a Mongolian My Hero is You animation in June and July 2020. Also, a limited number of printed

books have been made available for children in all regions of the country. WHO and USAID supported the production of 10,000 copies and handed them over to the National Center for Mental Health to distribute. Save the Children in Mongolia distributed 3750 copies to the National Emergency Management Agency and the national-level Authority for Family, Children and Youth Development, along with local counterparts, to reach seven provinces and three districts of the capital Ulaanbaatar.



Indonesia

The Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection launched the storybook nationwide during a press conference by the Indonesian National Board for Disaster Management.



Suriname

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) distributed one hard copy to every family in Suriname.

Namibia/Wales

The University of Namibia and the University of Cardiff in Wales collaborated to translate the storybook into five Namibian languages. The process included translation workshops with language professionals.



[Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [Part 3](#)

Occupied Palestinian Territories

The Norwegian Refugee Council broadcasted an audio version of My Hero is You on local radio in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, which has been broadcasting psychosocial support messages.



Greece

The national Sunday newspaper Ethnos included the book as a free supplement and distributed 6,000 copies on 26 April 2020.

Stories of readers and adapters



Slovenia

The Institute for long-term care (IDO) printed copies of My Hero is You to distribute to all kindergartens, to associations for children with cancer and to the paediatric department of the University Medical Centre Ljubljana.

Nigeria

The Save the Deaf and Endangered Languages Initiative (S-DELI) is planning to create a visual translation of the storybook in Indigenous Nigerian Sign Language.



Kenya, Uganda, Nepal

The My Book Buddy non-profit organization has included the storybook in the book bags that it has distributed to its reading clubs in several countries.

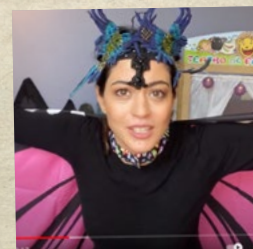


United States of America

Stanford University adapted the story into a short animated film, with input and oversight from the IASC Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Reference Group (IASC MHPSS RG). The faculty at the Stanford School of Medicine, together with the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine, served as advisors on the film, which was made by an award-winning team of animators. The film aims to convey messages of hope, resilience, solidarity and empowerment to children and their caregivers around the world, and to date it has received over 2.4 million views.

Ghana

The Beacon of Hope Foundation printed copies of the 100 book to donate to Odorkor 7 Primary and Middle School, located in a small community in the Ablekuma North Municipal Assembly area of Accra. The donated books benefited 545 students.



Brazil

The well-known Brazilian actress Carol Castro recorded the story in a fun and interactive video produced by PAHO and MHPSS.net.

Lesotho

The charity Dolen Cymru Wales Lesotho Link created a Sesotho text translation and audio file of the storybook. It collaborated with the Network of Early Childhood Development of Lesotho to broadcast the story in a series of episodes on radio stations across the African country. After each reading, children were able to participate live in the radio show and chat about the story.

Stories of readers and adapters

Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwe Blind Women Trust (ZBWT) created an English Braille version of the storybook, which by January 2021 had been downloaded over 2000 times from

the IASC website. A transcription team at ZBWT developed the Braille version and captioned the storybook's illustrations, and their version was later reused by adaptors in several other countries. ZBWT provided a number of hard copies to the communities it works with and, as it did not have enough resources to meet demand, it also disseminated an audio version. Jules Daudi, co-founder of ZBWT and herself visually impaired, said: "But readers prefer the Braille version [...] Feeling the text with our hands makes a much more significant impact than someone just reading to us." She continued: "Mothers have now been telling the story to their communities to communicate COVID-19 messages, and for once they do not feel excluded from the community."



Ukraine

With support from WHO Ukraine, English teachers at a school in Lutsk, have been using the storybook during their classes to educate their students on COVID-19 and also to improve their English skills. The storybook was seen as an excellent opportunity to help students cope with the situation and to improve their English simultaneously. Together with the students, the teachers created an educational package based on My Hero is You, which is now publicly available for teachers, parents and children in Ukraine to use.



Thailand

UNICEF distributed 37,000 copies of My Hero is You to all primary schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission and to early childhood development centres under the Department of Local Administration. Schools have been using the book to conduct additional activities with their students. For example, the Namaipittayakom school in Ban Dung district, Udon Thani, organized an activity called "Reader's Theatre". The high school students put together a performance of My Hero is You and performed it to younger students at nearby primary schools. The performance gave the older students an opportunity to use their creativity and become communicators to others in the community. Baan Maelai school in Hod district, Chiang Mai organized an activity called "COVID-19 storybook", in which students in Grades 5 and 6 read My Hero is You and then wrote their own storybooks. The activity encouraged them to learn more about COVID-19 and to apply it in their writing. UNICEF also provided copies of My Hero is You to UNICEF mobile libraries in Mae Hong Son, Tak and Loei provinces. Mobile library staff read the books to children in remote areas and afterwards engaged them in activities.

Stories of readers and adapters



Germany

The By Kids, For Kids Story Time podcast series produced an audio drama in both German and English, which is available on all well-known podcast platforms. Children from all around the world participated as voice actors, recording on cell phones in their homes, which gave the production an additional powerful layer. The children said that they felt like heroes themselves, being able to share My Hero is You with so many children around the world. Audio producer Dan Dewes said: "We all felt that in adapting this storybook we could do something in these unprecedented times, and it provided me with a sense of agency." The By Kids, For Kids podcast was downloaded about 100,000 times per month and the My Hero is You episode is the most frequently downloaded of all its 120 episodes available online.

Philippines

A High School in Cavite organized a storytelling challenge for teachers on My Hero is You to celebrate National Reading Month Celebration 2020. The seven submissions judged to be the most creative were viewed in total over 36,000 times.

Bangladesh

More than 800,000 Rohingya people are living in camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Audio versions of the storybook were produced by BBC Media Action, and UNCHR rolled out workshops based on the book in Cox's Bazar for children up to 16 years old. Relief International helped UNCHR with piloting the programme and developing the workshops. A group of community psychosocial volunteers (CPVs) received training to help facilitate the workshops, which were implemented by two of UNCHR's partners in 5–6 camps. The workshops were held daily for small groups of 4–5 children at a time, and 22,000 hard copies of the book were distributed to support the audio.



Republic of Korea

Professor Child & Adolescent Psychology and Development from Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, in collaboration with the Korean Psychological Association (KPA) and Korean Center for Disease Control and Prevention (KDCCDC) developed multiple animations that received many thousands views. The animations were narrated by the famous Korean singer and radio DJ Yeol Yoo. A sign language specialist supported a different version for children with hearing impairments. In collaboration with the Administration of Education in the Republic of Korea, the animations were shown in all schools and pre-eliminatory schools.

How the story has helped our heroes

"When I had the coronavirus, I had to go to a quarantine centre alone. When I was in quarantine, I imagined Ario came to me and joined me with my Mom and Dad and sisters."

Child
Occupied Palestinian Territories

"Together with other mums, we have been telling our children that at the moment the only contagion allowed is solidarity ... solidarity with our loved ones and with everyone else in this country means 'stay at home' to protect others. This tale is the perfect way to express and 'animate' this concept..."

Parent
Italy

"This book is amazing and just what my little boy needs to hear right now to deal with all the changes going on around him."

Parent
United Kingdom

"The story might touch people's hearts regardless of race, culture, country and generation. A brave little girl is the main character who helps other children keep themselves safe, and there are many child characters with diverse ethnic backgrounds in the story. Children become friends with each other through an imaginary journey. I also see how the story is used in the children's daily lives: children spread their arms, mirroring Ario's wings, to stay physically distanced."

Professor in child & adolescent psychology and development
Republic of Korea



How the story has helped our heroes

"Their favourite part of all, without exception, was the creating a safe place in your mind part. We paused the story there and spent a few minutes imagining and building their special worlds. So beautiful ... sandy beaches with fish jumping onto hooks, waterfall paradises, secret islands with fruit trees all loaded with perfectly ripe fruit. [...] They loved the idea of being heroes in their own small community, helping to keep everyone safe. They could see the power in that."

Teacher
Torres Strait Islands

"In Iceland, we think this book will serve parents and children well as both a helpful support now and in the future with MHPSS calming ideas and a gentle and beautiful reminder of a challenging time which we passed through. On a personal level, my five-year-old daughter loves this book and loves to tell me with pride how she is being a COVID hero by following all the rules and missing out on things she likes to do. She also tells me she is going to her safe space when she gets upset with her little brother now. She didn't actively have this language before the book, so thank you from my family for this."

MHPSS expert and mother
Iceland

"I really enjoyed it. I liked the dragon, I liked breathing fire. Thank you for the story, it made me happy. I like being a hero."

Child
United Kingdom



How the story has helped our heroes

"Bonjour je te remercie très sincèrement d'avoir pensée à moi en m'envoyant ce livre et de mon côté je vais chercher les partenaires ici au niveau de la Centrafrique afin d'imprimer le livre en grande quantité pour distribuer aux enfants de la Centrafrique, car présentement à Bangui, plus de 11 cas de contamination de virus COVID-19 ont été déjà enregistrés dans la capitale et les enfants sont les plus traumatisés."

President of Educational Association in Bangui, Ecole Education Programme,
Central African Republic



"My Hero

Another thing, before you depart,
We are just at the start
Of a glorious awakening, thanks to you,
Giving us hope and motivation, and some
courage too!

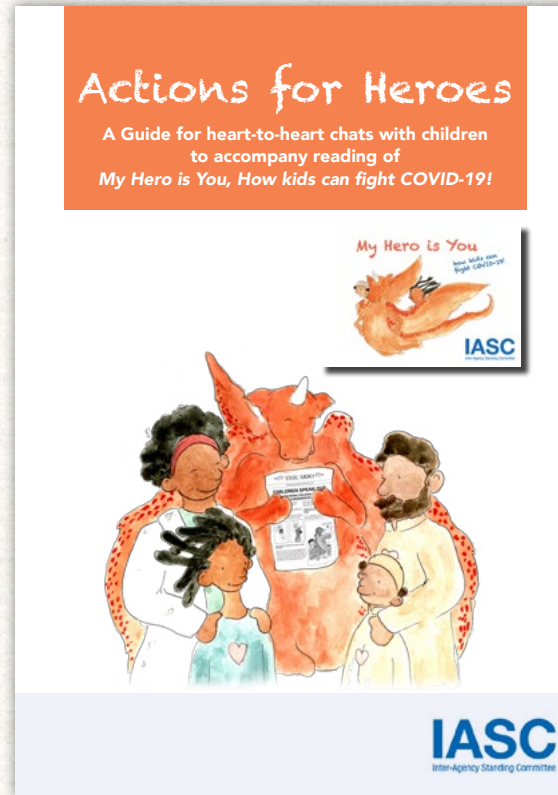
We close our eyes and sleep every night,
Knowing that we see light
In the darkest of times, and we commend,
Our very special hero, just around the bend

Hope is here, I promise you this,
Hope is here, it shall bring us bliss
Families will come together, friends too,
And I will know that my hero will always be
you"

Section of poem written by primary school student
Australia

The accompanying guide *Actions for Heroes*

The *Actions for Heroes* guide is developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC MHPSS RG) to accompany reading the children's storybook *My Hero is You* and was released in February 2021. *Actions for Heroes* provides tips for conversations with children about COVID-19 related stressors and changes. The guide explains how adults can create safe spaces for children to openly share their feelings, and how to help children manage stress. The guide also directs adults on how to promote positive actions that children can take to protect themselves and others. The intervention was developed through a comprehensive consultation, and field-testing process among IASC MHPSS RG Members and countries using *My Hero is You*.



Actions for Heroes is now available in [English](#), [Arabic](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#), [Spanish](#), [Ukrainian](#), more translations are still ongoing [see list here](#).



Find out more

Full links to *My Hero is You*

For the full list of translations, see:

interagencystandingcommittee.org/my-hero-is-you

A comprehensive list of the adaptations, see:

interagencystandingcommittee.org/adaptations-my-hero-you-country-level-initiatives

This video shows the making of the storybook:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=YecOjP0LHXA&feature=emb_title

This short video shows how the book has become a global phenomenon:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1QO66Kxsrk

Further resources from the IASC MHPSS RG

Actions for Heroes, a guide for heart-to-heart chats with children to accompany reading of *My Hero is you* has been released; see:

interagencystandingcommittee.org/actions-for-heroes

For further resources for COVID-19 developed by the IASC MHPSS RG, see:

interagencystandingcommittee.org/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-resources-covid-19

For questions to the IASC Reference Group for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (IASC MHPSS RG), please contact: mhpss.refgroup@gmail.com

Coming
soon *My Hero
is You* 2021
Edition

